and in turn our state is one of the nation's leaders in space industries. The National Space Symposium, held annually in Colorado Springs, emphasizes the importance of technology in our state and nation. Space Command, Air Force Academy, and NASA, are some of the major presences. In addition, four space centers tied in with NASA are based in Northern Colorado: the Center for Aerospace Structure, Colorado Center for Aerospace Research, Center for Space Construction, and Bioserve Technologies, which produces hardware for the space shuttle.

Our universities are aware of the need for high-tech education, and have focused on preparing students for this field. The University of Colorado at Colorado Springs offers a well established Master of Engineering Degree in Space Operations, and the Air Force Academy continually graduating students into this field. Graduates of the University of Colorado-Boulder, which offers the only aerospace degree in Northern Colorado, also support Colorado's space industry.

At the college level internship opportunities become significant. Employers see cooperative education programs and internships as real-world employment experience which lets college students become familiar with an organization and its work style. High-tech industries are seeing a trend toward expensive training costs and high employee turnover. By partnering with colleges and universities, high-tech industries will see a more highly trained workforce entering their industry and employees who are more committed to the organization.

The main idea behind cooperative education and internships are that they provide students the opportunity to apply theory learned in the classroom to the workplace. High-tech industries now consider the use of partnering with a university's cooperative education and internship programs as the number one recruitment tool for long-term commitments of regular employment.

For example, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs recognized this as an important investment in students' futures. In addition to helping their own students with internships, the University itself provides internships to students from other universities without internship opportunities. The University has formed partnerships with community, junior, and 4-year colleges without engineering programs.

In conclusion, this is a critical time; we must start today if we want to solve the high-tech employment problem. The signs are everywhere that high-tech is booming, but high-tech employees are not. We must act fast, for studies show key math and science decisions are made by a student at the 5th to 7th grade level. This means that there can be up to a ten-year lead-time for bachelor degree level technology workers. There are four areas that I think we should focus on in order to help solve the problem.

No. 1, Clearly understand the challenge, communicate it to our teachers, parents and students, and consider the consequences of not acting on this issue immediately.

No. 2, Better connect education systems and industry.

No. 3, Find innovative ways to remove barriers to education in math and science, and continue improvement in higher education.

No. 4, Leverage government funding through greater collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions and the private industry.

We need to work together in order to solve this problem. Our universities need to increase engineering and computer sciences scholarships, improve distance learning, and expand their internship and cooperative education programs to meet the needs of the high-tech industry. Our government needs to upgrade training and outsource more work, education, and training. Our industries must increase recruiting, build higher retention rates, and offer on-site courses. And finally, our public schools must increase partnerships with outside entities, educate our teachers about technology, and make science and math fun for our students.

The examples I have given from my home state of Colorado demonstrate that through increased internships, partnerships, teacher training, and K–12 student programs, communities can do something to meet the employment needs of the 21st Century.

The United States will continue to be a global leader in the technology arena if these ideas are implemented tomorrow and we ensure that our schools are producing the best, most educated workforce in the world.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, first, for the information of all Senators and others who are following the status of the conference between the Senate and the House on the annual authorization bill for the Department of Defense, the negotiations between the Senate and the House reached the final stage—and, indeed, concluded for all practical purposes—last night.

We had several meetings throughout the day, under the supervision of our able chairman, Mr. THURMOND, with Mr. SPENCE and Mr. SKELTON from the House, and Senator LEVIN and myself.

I wish to report that at the day's end we were far enough along in reaching a final conference agreement that a set of sheets—the traditional conference sheets—were signed by all 10 Republicans on the committee. I have to await any statement by Senator LEVIN with respect to participation by the Democrats. But I anticipate on behalf of Senator THURMOND that Senator THURMOND will soon send to the House a final conference proposal, as modified by such agreements as we were able to reach in the course of our negotiations yesterday. If the House is able to agree to that proposal, we have essentially concluded the conference. With 10 signatures on the conference sheets, we have enough Senate conferees in support of the conference agreement for the Committee to file a conference report.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, do we have a standing order with reference to time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is a morning business limit of 5 minutes.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I have about four items. I am not sure I can finish them in 5 minutes, but if there is no one here I will ask for an extension of time.

STEVE SCHIFF AUDITORIUM

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, last night the Senate passed H. Res. 3731. This legislation designates a special auditorium at Sandia National Laboratories as the Steve Schiff Auditorium. Steve spoke in that auditorium on several occasions as part of his long service to the people of the State of New Mexico. I believe we all know, now that we have had a chance to look at Steve Schiff's life and his time in the House, before his unfortunate death from cancer, that he was in all respects a good public servant—he demonstrated integrity of the highest order, deep and fundamental decency, and an acute and open mind. He went about his business quietly but with efficiency. He was great at telling stories, usually about himself. He was a model for all politicians to admire.

Mr. President, I wish that we could do something more significant than naming this very, very fine auditorium at Sandia National Laboratories after him. We will have a ceremony when that takes place officially, and the people of his district and our State will join us in a celebration that I hope is a fitting tribute to our deceased colleague.

(The remarks of Mr. DOMENICI pertaining to the introduction of S. 2395 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

FRENCH UTILIZATION OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. DOMENICI. Now, Mr. President, Senator ROD GRAMS and I traveled to France to develop a better understanding of policies underpinning the utilization of nuclear energy for about 80 percent of their electricity. We visited several key French facilities, and Senator FRED THOMPSON joined us after the site visit and participated in several of the high-level meetings with